HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYERS

Labour Market Information *for Your Business*

A practical guide

Alberta
HUMAN RESOURCES
AND EMPLOYMENT

This book is for owners, employers, supervisors and managers of businesses and organizations, including not-for-profit agencies, who are aiming to achieve greater productivity and competitiveness in their enterprise. Its intent is to increase awareness about and understanding of labour market information (LMI): its use and practical application. LMI covers a wide range of topics and issues: the economy, demographics, trends, industry activity, occupational forecasts and technology.

This publication is available on-line through the Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website—Alberta's leading on-line source for career, learning and employment information. To access this and additional publications, visit **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**

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This information was accurate, to the best of our knowledge, at the time of printing. Labour market information and educational programs are subject to change, and you are encouraged to confirm with additional sources of information when making career, education and employment decisions.

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Labour Market Information
for Your Business

A practical guide

Invest a few minutes of your time reading this publication about the Alberta labour market. You'll find that it can guide your research, assist your analysis and help you make decisions that may improve your company and your profits.

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Introduction

Who is this publication for?

This publication provides business people with practical advice about finding and using labour market information (LMI) in Alberta. It is probably most useful to businesses with fewer than 500 employees.

If you want to start a new business, expand an existing one or improve your balance sheet through better management of your business assets, you can benefit from reading this publication.

What is labour market information (LMI)?

Labour market information is data about the supply of and demand for labour within a specific area (i.e. geographic region or sector). LMI includes economic, social and demographic information about workers and potential workers and the relationship of that data to the operation of the broader economy. It provides insight into current job opportunities and the specific needs of local employers. It may also provide historical trends and forecasts of labour market conditions.

Did You Know?

Monthly labour market news is available on-line by provincial region. Go to **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/employment/lmi/alberta.asp**

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How can labour market information help your business?

Using labour market information in your business is a great way to tap the brainpower of labour market experts from across the country. These specialists gather information on everything from wages to best practices, mine it for meaning and present it in tables and reports that are easy to use once you've had a little experience. It's like having your own dedicated research department. Best of all, this wealth of detailed intelligence about your local markets, province, nation and even foreign countries may be available free of charge.

Besides government reports, there are dozens of informal sources of labour market information you can use to your advantage. These include newspapers, magazines, the Internet and reports prepared by business and industry associations. All can be of benefit to you in running your business.

With current labour market information to support your decision-making, you stand a much better chance of:

- recruiting and retaining the very best employees
- persuading your investors to fund new or expanding enterprises
- finding new markets for your products or services
- expanding within the global marketplace, either physically or through e-commerce
- benefiting from effective industry practices
- developing business relationships that lead to joint ventures or outside investment in your company
- resolving in-house labour disputes
- satisfying regulatory requirements in any jurisdiction
- making more money.

It may take you some time to locate reliable sources of information that address your specific needs. Once you do, however, you'll be able to use that data time and again with better and better results. And, when you realize the competitive advantage this information provides, you won't regret your investment of time for a second.

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The Business Case *for Using* Labour Market Information

Let's start by examining some key issues that Alberta businesses face today and see how using labour market information can make any enterprise more productive and competitive.

The following chart identifies four top challenges for businesses and highlights the different kinds of labour market information readily available to address these challenges. Whatever your concern, LMI can help.

MATCHING KEY BUSINESS ISSUES WITH LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION	Types of Labour Market Information									
	Economy	Globalization	Demographics	Labour Market Trends	Industry/Sector Activity	Employment Standards	Workplace Health and Safety	Occupational Forecasts	Job Descriptions & Wage Information	Technological Change
Key Business Issue										
Recruiting and retaining employees	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	
Applying workplace and employment standards				■	■	■	■		■	■
Promoting safety and wellness				■	■		■			
Seizing opportunities for growth	■	■	■		■			■		■

Here's a more detailed look at the relationship between each business issue and LMI.

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Recruiting and retaining employees

Few things matter more to a business than finding and keeping skilled and knowledgeable employees. Labour market information can help you identify and address issues that are particularly important to you and your staff, such as:

- locating new sources of labour
- knowing the occupational demand and supply outlook for various industries
- providing more and better opportunities for staff development
- assisting with wage or contract negotiations.

Labour market trends can inform you about what has happened in the labour market and help you predict how similar circumstances may affect Alberta's rapidly evolving labour market in the future. Being aware of trends helps you understand the movement of workers and the conditions under which they work at national, regional, provincial or local levels. LMI trends can include employment levels by sector or industry, compensation levels by occupation, the geographical migration of workers, educational and training trends and forms of work such as full-time and part-time employment, contract labour and self-employment.

LMI *in Action*

"We operate a full service machine shop and millwright facility in Grande Prairie. Like many Alberta businesses, we have trouble attracting and keeping skilled tradespeople because of the booming provincial economy. We've used the publications and seminars of Alberta Human Resources and Employment to confirm our hiring strategies and to learn about other possible solutions that have worked for other businesspeople. We have also used the information in the publications to help us put together strategic banking plans. I'd definitely recommend that other firms take advantage of the different kinds of labour market information available to Alberta businesses."

—General Manager, machine shop and millwright facility, Grande Prairie

Being aware of trends can help you find and recruit unemployed or underemployed workers, identify training needs and set wage guidelines.

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Labour market information from specific industries or economic sectors gives you a snapshot of what is happening in your industry, the growth or decline of competitors, changes in the number of employees and average wage rates. A complete list of Alberta industries can be found at **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/edmonton/overview3.asp**

Information about specific occupations (such as cashiers, nursing aides or welders) can provide you with insight into average wages, training requirements, compensation levels, typical responsibilities and employment forecasts. These data tell you a great deal about the background, experience and expectations of workers in your industry or of those you are thinking of hiring.

LMI *in Action*

"Recruiting good people is the key to our success. We take advantage of every opportunity to find good workers, wherever they may be from. We work routinely with tech schools like SAIT and NAIT and participate in annual job fairs. Lately we've also been working closely with a Toronto-based recruiting firm that finds us the right people and handles the recruitment for a fee. It is an expensive but effective way of finding the skilled people we need."

—Director of Human Resources, oil rig manufacturer, Calgary

Applying workplace and employment standards

The relationship between you and your employees must be based on mutual respect for workplace rights and responsibilities. When someone fails to respect the law or meet their obligations, the relationship deteriorates. Often, that lowers productivity; in the worst cases, it can lead to a lawsuit. Neither is good for business. Labour market information sources can help ensure that you are aware of:

- your legal obligations to your employees
- industry developments about effective practices
- current employee expectations regarding the workplace.

Standards develop in several ways. Government agencies legislate certain aspects of the job market, such as the minimum wage or statutory holidays. Ordinary industry practice may result in widely recognized and observed voluntary standards for employment benefits and pension plans. These standards may be called best or effective practices. Finally, employees themselves may create informal standards through their common expectations about issues like day care or flexible working hours.

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Being aware of industry standards helps you make decisions that keep your business in step with, or even ahead of, the usual practice. The benefit to you is a more appreciative, productive workforce. You'll find information on Alberta's employment standards and workplace health and safety at **www.worksafely.org**

LMI *in Action*

"We use labour market information to assist us with all sorts of human resources issues. Our company is a highly automated logistics firm with about 2,500 employees at three locations in Canada. A fast-paced business like this depends on teamwork to run smoothly. We're proud of the human resources systems we have in place to build and maintain employee morale and productivity. Labour market information helps us with everything from strengthening our team skills to setting appropriate compensation levels to identifying contacts in industry and government who can give us a hand with specific workforce issues. Information like this can be of tremendous value to any company."

—Human Resources Manager, supply chain management business, Calgary

Promoting safety and wellness

The safety and well-being of your employees is essential to the smooth and productive operation of your business. As with many workplace issues, however, the standards for on-the-job safety and workplace wellness evolve to reflect changes in legislation, technology or attitudes. Labour market information can help you to remain current about:

- legislated safety requirements
- healthy work environments
- fostering and sustaining personal respect and wellness in your workplace.

While today's workplaces are safer than ever, accidents still happen. However, study after study shows that these accidents are preventable. One of your responsibilities as an employer is to ensure that all employees receive safety training appropriate to their positions. That responsibility also extends to non-legislated matters such as designing an ergonomic work environment that reduces physical strain. Labour market information can keep you up to date on all of these issues.

Labour market information can also assist you with wellness issues that are more psychological or social than physical in nature. For example, interpersonal conflicts and personal discrimination not only harm your employees, but also hurt your productivity. Information about labour markets can enhance your understanding of these complex issues and help you resolve them for everyone's benefit.

Other sources of labour market information offer you ways to encourage your employees to take greater responsibility for their personal wellness both on the job and at home. Thoughtful employee wellness programs, along with your own example as a business leader, can go far toward creating a healthy, safe workplace.

LMI *in Action*

"I'm a Home Care Co-ordinator with a not-for-profit organization in Medicine Hat. Our clientele run the gamut of age groups and include everyone from children with severe disabilities to young moms with postpartum depression to seniors needing specialized care in their own homes. It's really hard to find enough workers in Alberta right now, so we turn to labour market information for help. We pay particular attention to unemployment stats because they tell us how hard it's going to be to find workers when we need them and how far afield we're going to have to look. Labour market information about alternative sources of labour, such as immigrants and the disabled, has been of particular use to us lately. Government sources also provide us with insight into how to evaluate the background and qualifications of such workers.

We have made good use of government publications about interviewing techniques and labour standards. Right now, I'm using two booklets from Alberta Human Resources and Employment on workforce diversity and conflict resolution in the workplace. Both are great resources. We find information about employment standards and workforce health and safety relevant as well. I have also taken part in workshops put on by Alberta Human Resources and Employment. These are simply excellent. It is really useful to get more perspective on what is happening in the job market and on the different tools that are available to help us out. Now that we're turning our attention to expansion of our business into new communities, I am finding demographical data to be very helpful in assessing market potential and feasibility. All of these labour market tools help enormously with our planning."

—Home Care Co-ordinator, not-for-profit home nursing firm, Medicine Hat

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Seizing opportunities for growth

If you are starting a new business or expanding your existing enterprise, labour market information can help you increase your competitiveness by:

- making it easier for you to finance a start-up or recapitalize your existing operation
- adopting upgraded technology to enhance your business
- identifying emerging or underdeveloped markets for your products or services
- identifying potential partners for your business ventures.

Excellent data are available at the international, national and provincial levels. Less detailed information can be obtained for many individual communities. The data address such matters as:

- the changing balance of trade with foreign countries
- monetary exchange rates
- foreign contract opportunities
- national and provincial employment rates
- demographic data
- human resources programs.

This information helps you to calculate the potential size of the market for your product or service, determine the extent of the competition you may face in a given market, identify sources of skilled workers and their wage expectations, find training programs for your existing staff, gain insight into emerging technologies that might benefit your venture or even pair you with potential business partners.

To stay ahead of the competition, you must have a firm grasp of economic trends and the marketplace into which you are selling. Labour market information is one of the key ways to gain such understanding.

LMI *in Action*

"Our company has retail grocery stores throughout Alberta. We use labour market information for planning all the time—probably twice a week. We find it especially helpful when we are thinking about opening a new outlet in a market that we are not familiar with. Knowing things like the local unemployment rate and regional wage levels allows us to tailor our operations to the community and makes it easier to hire staff. We also make good use of employment standards information, especially for planning purposes in this tight labour market. In fact, we've rewritten our recruitment strategy and developed new policies on hiring based on labour market information. I think that anyone who hasn't used labour market information would be surprised by the range and depth of the information that is available."

—Human Resources Specialist, retail grocery chain, Edmonton

Labour market information at the regional or community level gives you insight into the size and characteristics of emerging labour markets. Abundant data exist on everything from age groups to average incomes to spending habits. When combined with data such as the rates of migration into the province, this information becomes a very powerful planning tool.

An underused informal source of labour market information is the network of business relationships you can develop by joining a local, regional or national association dedicated to advancing the interests of your community or economic sector. Chambers of Commerce can be found in most Alberta urban centres. Many rural counties and municipalities have economic development agencies that bring together local business people. Membership in professional associations or industry organizations will sometimes give you access to labour market statistics that are not widely known or available.

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Alberta has established economic and labour market information industry networks throughout the province. Members meet twice a year to share information and proactively address labour market issues through open discussion and collaboration. For more information, or to participate in these networks, call Alberta Human Resources and Employment at (780) 427-8506 in Edmonton (elsewhere in Alberta, call 310-0000 and enter the 10-digit number).

LMI *in Action*

"Our industry-driven organization, which started in the mid-1990s, brings together representatives of our industry, government at the municipal, provincial and federal levels and the educational institutions that train the people we need. We saw the need for a collaborative industry organization that could speak with one voice on the important issues facing us. Today, human resources is one of the most important issues confronting our industry. The labour shortage impedes the growth of existing companies, while the choice of careers that are available makes it harder to attract students into our business. Having industry, government and training people in the same room allows us to define the issues properly, prioritize them and find solutions. That's the benefit of understanding each other and working together."

—Chair, industry-based professional association, Calgary

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Finding *and* Using Labour Market Information

To compete successfully, your business needs reliable, current information about conditions and expectations that influence the labour market. It is in your best interest to have a good understanding of some or all of these LMI topics:

- economy
- globalization
- demographics
- labour market trends
- industry/sector activity
- employment standards
- workplace health and safety
- occupational forecasts
- job descriptions and wage information
- technological change.

Your ability to benefit from each source of labour market information depends on understanding its nature and its uses. That's what we'll examine in this chapter.

Economy

What kind of information is this?

Economic data provide you with details about the provincial, national and international marketplace, including information on the general performance of domestic and foreign economies, taxation regimes, issues of political stability, currency exchange values, commodity prices, trade agreements, environmental regulations, transportation and labour supplies.

What can you do with it?

Being familiar with the general economic conditions that affect your business allows you to plan more effectively and respond more quickly to changing opportunities.

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For example, if you are a residential builder and the latest federal government budget introduces a tax incentive for the construction of public housing, you'll want to know the details of the new policy. With that information in hand, you may be able to penetrate a new market, hire more staff or invest in new equipment.

Where can you find it?

General economic information is easy to find. Statistics Canada provides national and global economic data with easy-to-understand explanations of economic terms and current events and presents detailed data on almost all aspects of economic activity. If you are interested in international trade, you will find that almost every foreign country offers a wealth of on-line data about its domestic affairs, including its economic situation.

In Alberta, the key sources of general economic information are Alberta Human Resources and Employment, Alberta Finance and Alberta Economic Development. These departments provide current statistical data, demographic data, economic forecasts and information on regional developments, export markets, immigration, economic indicators, sector-specific analyses and incentive programs.

Key economic sources

- Alberta-specific labour market information
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi
- Alberta Finance
  www.finance.gov.ab.ca
- Alberta Economic Development
  www.alberta-canada.com
- Canadian Economy On-line
  www.canadianeconomy.gc.ca
- Statistics Canada
  www.statcan.ca
- Conference Board of Canada
  www.conferenceboard.ca

Globalization

What kind of information is this?

Globalization refers to the increasing integration of national economies. This can occur in many ways. For example, it may result from the reduction or elimination of trade barriers or the development of technologies that permit instantaneous, round-the-clock electronic business dealings.

This type of labour market information usually relates to international marketing opportunities for Alberta goods and services or cost savings resulting from lower labour costs or favourable currency exchange rates.

What can you do with it?

Understanding the global marketplace and the place of labour within it presents Alberta businesspeople with new opportunities. For example, if your firm specializes in environmental management, you may find that many foreign countries are eager for your knowledge of regulatory standards. You may also locate other sources of skilled workers in industries similar to yours.

Working in global markets imposes standards of its own on Alberta businesses. You or your staff might participate in European or Asian trade missions that lead to international marketing opportunities. Taking advantage of such opportunities would mean, however, that your representatives are fluent in a foreign language. You might also need to restructure your work schedules to communicate effectively with business centres in other time zones.

Where can you find it?

Begin your search for information about international trade with the International Trade Division of Statistics Canada. There you'll find detailed trade statistics for more than 18,000 commodities. You can also purchase the *World Trade Atlas*, which contains information on 250 of Canada's foreign trading partners. Go to **www.statcan.ca/english/ads/trade/atlas.htm** for more information about how to obtain and use this resource.

The Government of Alberta publishes an *Annual International Trade Review* that analyzes the province's international exports of goods and services by industry, commodity, region and country. Quarterly statistics about the export of specific commodities are also available. Studies conducted by Alberta Economic Development address key matters such as international competitiveness by sector, trade barriers and others.

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Key globalization sources

- Key international trade information
  www.statcan.ca/english/ads/trade
- *Alberta Exported*
  www.alberta-canada.com
  Biannual newsletter from Alberta Economic Development about Alberta international trade initiatives. Go to Statistics & Publications and click on Export & Trade.
- Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations
  www.iir.gov.ab.ca
  Features news about international diplomacy and trade policies.

Demographics

What kind of information is this?

Demographic information describes the population of a community, province, region or country. It can include information on gender, martial status, age group, income, education, occupation, housing, family size and so on.

These data provide the information you need to support your decisions about business, marketing, comunications and workforce planning. Being aware of population changes enables you to adapt quickly when marketing your product or services.

While demographic information can be very useful, try to remain aware of changing local conditions that may affect the demographic character of your target market. For example, vibrant economic conditions in a specific community or region may bring about a much greater degree of migration to the area than would otherwise be the case. Often the local newspaper or news broadcasts will be your best source of information on regional conditions. Try to compare your general demographic data with more anecdotal news stories.

What can you do with it?

Demographic information is useful for planning because it lets you target your markets more precisely. For example, if your business or organization accommodates the growing seniors market by providing extended care services or items such as hearing aids, you would undoubtedly be very interested in identifying communities with comparatively older populations.

Where can you find it?

Demographic information tends to come from census surveys, which are usually conducted by the federal, provincial and municipal governments. While demographic information is readily available, be aware that it can quickly become outdated when the economy is growing rapidly. Still, few sources of information are better than census data when you're trying to figure out demographic trends.

An excellent place to start your research is the Alberta Human Resources and Employment Labour Market Information website at **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi**. It contains provincial and regional population forecasts, labour force profiles for specific groups such as Aboriginal people (off-reserve), youth, older workers, immigrants and persons with disabilities. This website also contains monthly labour force statistics at the provincial level and eight economic regional levels that include working age population, labour force numbers, participation rates, employment and unemployment rates, gender, age, educational attainment, marital status, occupation and industry.

Another useful source is Alberta Finance (**www.finance.gov.ab.ca**), where you'll find economic trends and forecasts, statistics on employment, retail sales, housing starts, manufacturing shipments, population, inflation, business investment, salary and wages, the gross domestic product (GDP), data on employment, unemployment and other factors affecting the labour force in Alberta, along with current economic commentary.

While general census data are freely available to the public, more detailed analyses are often costly. Be sure that the data will meet your needs before you pay to obtain this information.

Did You Know?

The Alberta Government Library has a collection of more than 300 occupational health and safety videos that you can borrow for use in your company training sessions. Find out more at **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/publications/videocassettes.asp**

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Key demographic sources

- Alberta-specific labour market information
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi
- Alberta Finance
  www.finance.gov.ab.ca
- Census of Canada
  www12.statcan.ca/english/census01
- Alberta community profiles
  www.albertafirst.com
- Alberta market research
  www.bsa.cbsc.org
  Choose English, click on Market Research, then select Alberta and choose your area of interest from the extensive menu.

Labour market trends

What kind of information is this?

Labour market trends refer to the movement of workers within an economy because of diverse influences. These influences may include:

- new trade partnerships across the country and around the world
- information technology that breaks down trade barriers
- tax advantages offered by specific jurisdictions (such as Alberta)
- concerns about political stability and global security
- labour shortages and strong economic growth and activity
- investment in research and development.

Data about labour market trends cover matters such as employment levels by sector or industry, compensation levels by occupation, geographical migration of workers, education and training trends, and forms of work such as full-time and part-time employment, contract labour and self-employment.

What can you do with it?

Labour market information dealing with trends relies on a snapshot of the past to offer insight into the future. Examining economic, labour force, demographic and gobalization trends can make you aware of cyclical, seasonal and irregular variations in the labour market. Without data on labour market trends, there would be nothing on which to base the assumptions used in forecasting.

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Forecasts can sometimes change quickly because of volatile economic or environmental conditions, so it is to your advantage to be aware of assumptions used in your industry forecasts.

Where can you find it?

Data about labour market trends come from a number of sources including surveys, census data, industry associations and administrative records. Labour market trends are often published and made available in print or on-line. Much of the information is free, but there tends to be a charge for detailed or geographically specific data.

Key labour market trends sources

- Alberta annual and regional labour market reviews
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi
  Click on Alberta's Labour Force Statistics.
- *Alberta Careers Update 2004* (publication)
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop
- Canada-wide labour market information: Service Canada
  http://lmi-imt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca
- Job Opportunity Index: Canada West Foundation
  www.cwf.ca
  Choose Projects, select The Western Economy Project and click Job Opportunities Index.

Industry/sector activity

What kind of information is this?

Alberta reports industry data using the North American Industrial Classification System (**www.gov.ab.ca/hre/edmonton/overview3.asp**). Information is usually available for the following industry sectors.

Goods-producing industry sectors:

- agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- construction
- manufacturing
- mining and oil and gas extraction
- utilities.

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Services industry sectors:

- accommodation and food services
- administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- arts, entertainment and recreation
- educational services
- finance and insurance
- health care and social assistance
- information and cultural industries
- management of companies and enterprises
- other services (except public administration)
- professional, scientific and technical services
- public administration
- real estate and rental and leasing
- retail trade
- transportation and warehousing
- wholesale trade.

More detailed industry data are frequently available. For example, in the case of manufacturing, data are reported according to categories such as clothing, machinery, transportation equipment, refined petroleum and coal products, and beverages.

What can you do with it?

Industry/sector activity data allow you to look closely at the structure and performance of your industry. Understanding these trends lets you compare your business performance to that of your industry or sector peers, identify potential sources of labour (for example, in sectors that are laying off workers) or identify opportunities for the expansion of your enterprise. In addition, forecasts offer you a reasonable glimpse of the future of your industry.

Where can you find it?

In Alberta, the Department of Economic Development provides analyses of activity by industry and by sector, as well as specialized reports on matters such as access to capital, trade show listings and marketing best practices. Federal sources (primarily Statistics Canada) offer comparable data. Both levels of government identify and explain the related policies and legislation. In addition, Alberta Human Resources and Employment provides annual provincial and regional labour market reviews.

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At a national level, the Alliance of Sector Councils, a co-ordinating body of approximately 29 industry sector councils, brings together business, labour, education and other professional groups to address sector-wide human resource issues.

Key industry/sector activity sources

- Alberta industry/sector statistics, economic policy and analysis
  www.alberta-canada.com/aed
  Go to Department Divisions, then click on Policy & Economic Analysis.
- National data by industry/sector: Industry Canada
  www.strategis.gc.ca
- The Business Link
  www.cbsc.org/alberta
- The Alliance of Sector Councils
  www.councils.org

Workplace and employment standards

What kind of information is this?

Employment standards are the minimum standards of employment businesses must implement for their employees. Alberta's employment standards apply to such matters as:

- payment of earnings
- minimum wage
- hours of work, rest periods and days of rest
- overtime and overtime pay
- vacations and vacation pay
- general holidays and general holiday pay
- maternity and parental leave
- termination of employment
- employment of individuals under 18 years of age
- adolescent employment in the restaurant and food services industry
- permits for employment.

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What can you do with it?

In this case, it is not a matter of what you can do with employment standards information, but rather what you must do with it. Fortunately, the standards are clear, which means that you can develop your own routines for handling many mandatory business procedures.

Be aware, however, that not all Alberta employees are subject to these employment standards. For example, ranch hands, domestic employees, cross-border truckers, managers and those working in the television industry are either exempt or fall under federal regulations.

Where can you find it?

You'll find everything you need to know about Alberta's standards in the *Employment Standards Code and Regulation*. If you deal with unions in your business, you can stay on top of current practices and decisions through the Alberta Labour Relations Board. Human Resources and Social Development Canada[1] sets federal standards.

Key workplace and employment standards sources

- *Employment Standards Code and Regulation*
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards
  Click on Publications for fact sheets about specific issues.
- Workers' Compensation Board
  www.wcb.ab.ca
- Alberta Labour Relations Board
  www.alrb.gov.ab.ca
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada
  www.hrsdc.gc.ca
  Choose English. Go to Labour and Workplace, click on Labour Standards and select Employment Standards Legislation in Canada.
- Employment tip sheets: Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS)
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/tips
- *A Guide to Rights and Responsibilities in Alberta Workplaces* (publication)
- *Sources and Resources: Workplace rights and responsibilities* (poster)
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop

[1] This federal government department name underwent a change in February 2006. The new department joins two former ministries, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and Social Development Canada. Both ministry websites were still functioning under their former titles at the time of publication.

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Workplace health and safety

What kind of information is this?

A healthy and safe workforce is a more productive workforce. That's why it's beneficial for employers to learn about workplace hazards and how to prevent employee accidents and injuries. Government agencies and industry associations are a good source of information.

What can you do with it?

Labour market information about workplace health and safety can bring many benefits to your business. Being aware of the most common ways in which injuries and accidents occur is the first step in making sure your workers stay safe. Over time, your leadership in this area will develop a culture of safety within your company. LMI like this can also help you find safety training programs that suit the needs of your particular business, build or strengthen your partnerships with employees, unions and government agencies and improve the scope and quality of any reporting you must do on health and safety performance.

Where can you find it?

Because health and safety in the workplace concerns all Albertans, it is easy to get clear guidance about such matters from a variety of sources. In response to recommendations from industry and labour groups, Alberta Human Resources and Employment created an information-sharing network called Work Safe Alberta. The provincial government has also created a *Health and Safety Toolkit for Small Business* that covers everything from workplace violence to the development of hazard assessments and emergency response plans.

Did You Know?

The Employment Standards branch has more than two dozen plain language fact sheets to help you deal with common labour issues. Topics include minimum wages, deductions for uniforms, complaint resolution, termination for just cause and more. Visit **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards/publications/index.asp**

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Key workplace health and safety sources

- The Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs
- Work Safe Alberta
  www.worksafely.org
- *Health and Safety Toolkit for Small Business*
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs
  Choose Workplace Health and Safety Resources for Small Businesses, then select the *Health and Safety Toolkit for Small Business.*
- E-Learning Programs about health and safety
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/learning
- *Safe and Healthy: A guide to managing an aging workforce* (publication)
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop
- *X-treme Safety: Survival tips for rookies in the workplace* (publication)
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop

Occupational forecasts

What kind of information is this?

Occupational forecasts predict the types of jobs that will be in demand, those that will be less in demand and the kinds of skills and abilities needed in the ever-changing job market. These forecasts are based on sophisticated economic models.

What can you do with it?

The key advantage that occupational forecasts bring to your business is an awareness of labour shortages or surpluses in a community or region where you are currently established or hope to be in future. With this knowledge in hand, you have a much better chance of finding the employees you need. This is particularly important in Alberta, where the vibrant economy has resulted in a low rate of unemployment. You can also use this information for labour force planning, especially when it comes to determining your future labour needs and making comparisons of the availability of labour in various parts of the province.

Where can you find it?

Occupational forecasts usually come from provincial or federal sources. Statistics are available for the province as a whole as well as for specific regions. Alberta Human Resources and Employment prepares an annual Labour Market Outlook that examines the chief influences on the job market (e.g. the high unemployment rate among young people and the trend toward retirees re-entering the job market).

The department has also developed an Occupational Demand and Supply Outlook that projects the occupational demand and supply for 140 different occupational groups in Alberta. Within each broad occupation group, there may be many different occupations. This information provides occupational demand and supply insight into current labour market trends and possible future imbalances.

Federal sources complement the provincial data by providing insight into other regions of the country where qualified employees may be available to your business because of comparatively poor economic circumstances. Data about international labour force conditions are also available.

If your business belongs to an industry association, check if it has resources that can help. For example, the Petroleum Human Resources Council of Canada has produced a detailed 10-year analysis of occupational demand in the upstream petroleum industry.

Key occupational forecast sources

- Alberta Labour Market Outlook
- Alberta Occupational Demand and Supply Outlook
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi
- WAGEinfo: Alberta wage and salary information
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/wageinfo
- *Alberta Careers Update 2004*
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada
  www.hrsdc.gc.ca
- National Labour Force Survey: Statistics Canada
  www.statcan.ca
  Select English, then type "national labour force survey" in the Search the Website box. In the results table, scroll to and click on Detailed Tables from CANSIM to find the current month survey results. This survey is conducted monthly.

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Job descriptions and wage information

What kind of information is this?

This is data about specific kinds of jobs. For many occupations, information is available on compensation, training requirements, typical responsibilities, advancement opportunities, career paths, personal characteristics, educational requirements and employment forecasts.

What can you do with it?

Labour market information like this is very practical. It can help you with a host of everyday issues like writing more effective job descriptions for recruitment ads, defining appropriate compensation levels and identifying training programs relevant to your production needs.

For example, accurate wage data can help you develop competitive hiring policies and make informed decisions about compensation. This labour market information is also useful in settling injury disputes, negotiating wages and providing career advice.

Where can you find it?

Both the federal and provincial governments compile and publish data about individual occupations. More broadly, they offer advice about everything from labour relations to work-sharing ideas to education and training initiatives. Professional and labour-related organizations also publish detailed information about specific occupations.

Every two or three years, Alberta Human Resources and Employment surveys employers about wages and salaries for full-time and part-time employees. The results of the survey are published in WAGEinfo and in the occupational profiles. Survey results are broken down by occupational group, geographical area and industry group.

If you're looking for ways to improve productivity by offering your employees the training for skills they need, visit SkillsSolutionsNet at **www.skillssolutionsnet.com**, an on-line skills credentialing tool created by The Conference Board of Canada.

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Key job description and wage information sources

- OCCinfo: more than 540 Alberta occupational profiles
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo
- WAGEinfo: Alberta wage and salary information
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/wageinfo
- SkillsSolutionsNet
  www.skillssolutionsnet.com
  Under Managers & Small Business Owners, click on
  Free registration, then complete the registration form.
- Workplace information and innovation: Social Development Canada
  www.sdc.gc.ca
  Choose English, then go to Policies & Programs. Click on Services for Business. Scroll to Labour and Workplace Information.
  Click on Workplace Information & Innovation.

Did You Know?

The International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) of the Alberta Government evaluates the training of people who were educated abroad and issues certificates comparing educational qualifications from other countries to provincial educational standards? Visit **www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/iqas**

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Technological change

What kind of information is this?

Technology, including tools, machines, materials and processes that help to solve human problems, drives today's business world. It is particularly crucial that your employees are computer literate and that your operations are as technologically sophisticated as they can be. There is a wealth of labour market information that can help you keep on top of both issues.

What can you do with it?

Some labour market information about technological change helps you to determine the most desirable technical skills needed for any operation, identify computer-based training programs for your employees and market your goods and services. Other data will teach you about new technologies that may give you a competitive advantage in your industry, whether through more efficient manufacturing, global e-commerce or workplace health and safety. Still other sources can assist you with commercializing technologies your business may have developed.

Where can you find it?

While there is no central library of information about technological change in business, the governments of Alberta and Canada are strong advocates of technological innovation. Their commitment to encouraging such change has led to many relevant studies, excellent websites and training programs.

Key technological change sources

- EDinfo: post-secondary education and training programs in Alberta
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/edinfo
- The Business Link
  www.cbsc.org/alberta
  Choose English and select Innovation.
- Technology roadmaps by industry: Industry Canada
  www.strategis.gc.ca
  Choose English, then click on Research, Technology and Innovation. Scroll down to Technology Roadmaps.

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Summary *of* Sources

The following sources from provincial and federal governments, industry associations and business organizations provide current information about labour market topics discussed in this book.

Economy

- Alberta-specific LMI: **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi**
- Alberta Finance: **www.finance.gov.ab.ca**
- Alberta Economic Development: **www.alberta-canada.com**
- Canadian Economy Online: **www.canadianeconomy.gc.ca**
- Statistics Canada: **www.statcan.ca**
- Conference Board of Canada: **www.conferenceboard.ca**

Globalization

- Key international trade information: **www.statcan.ca/english/ads/trade**
- *Alberta Exported*: **www.alberta-canada.com**
  Biannual newsletter from Alberta Economic Development about Alberta international trade initiatives. Go to Statistics & Publications and click on Export & Trade.
- Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations: **www.iir.gov.ab.ca**
  Features news about international diplomacy and trade policies.
- *World Trade Atlas*: **www.statcan.ca/english/ads/trade/atlas.htm**

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Demographics

- Alberta-specific labour market information: **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi**
- Alberta Finance: **www.finance.gov.ab.ca**
- Census of Canada: **www12.statcan.ca/english/census01**
- Alberta community profiles: **www.albertafirst.com**
- Alberta market research: **www.bsa.cbsc.org**
  Choose English, click Market Research, select Alberta and choose your area of interest from the extensive menu.

Labour market trends

- Alberta annual and regional labour market reviews:
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi
  Click on Alberta's Labour Force Statistics.
- *Alberta Careers Update 2004*: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**
- Canada-wide labour market information:
  http://lmi-imt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca
- Job Opportunity Index from the Canada West Foundation:
  www.cwf.ca
  Choose Projects, select The Western Economy Project, and click Job Opportunities Index.

Industry/sector activity

- Alberta industry/sector statistics, economic policy and analysis:
- **www.alberta-canada.com/aed**
  Go to Department Divisions, then click on Policy & Economic Analysis.
- National data by industry/sector: **www.strategis.gc.ca**
- The Business Link: **www.cbsc.org/alberta**
- List of Alberta industries:
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/edmonton/overview3.asp
- Alberta economic and labour market information industry networks. For more information, call (780) 427-8506.
- The Alliance of Sector Councils: **www.councils.org**

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Employment standards

- *Employment Standards Code and Regulation*:
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards
  Click on Publications for a complete listing of fact sheets about specific issues.
- Workers' Compensation Board: **www.wcb.ab.ca**
- Alberta Labour Relations Board: **www.alrb.gov.ab.ca**
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada:
  www.hrsdc.gc.ca
  Choose English. Go to Labour and Workplace, click on Labour Standards and select Employment Standards Legislation in Canada.
- Employment tip sheets: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/tips**
- *A Guide toRights and Responsibilities in Alberta Workplaces and Sources and Resources: Workplace rights and responsibilities* (complementary poster): **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**

Workplace health and safety

- The Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre:
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs
  For a copy of the *Health and Safety Toolkit for Small Business*, choose Workplace Health and Safety Resources for Small Businesses, then click on the toolkit.
- Work Safe Alberta: **www.worksafely.org**
- E-Learning Programs about health and safety:
  www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs/learning
- *Safe and Healthy: A guide to managing an aging workforce*:
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop
- *X-treme Safety: Survival tips for rookies in the workplace*:
  www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop

Did You Know?

Monthly labour market news is available on-line by provincial region. Go to **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/employment/lmi/alberta.asp**

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Occupational forecasts

- Alberta Occupational Demand and Supply Outlook
- Alberta Labour Market Outlook
- **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi**
- Alberta wage and salary information: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/wageinfo**
- *Alberta Careers Update 2004*: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**
- Human Resources and Social Development Canada: **www.hrsdc.gc.ca**
- National Labour Force Survey: www.statcan.ca. Select English, then type "national labour force survey" in the Search the Website box. In the results table, scroll to and click on Detailed Tables from CANSIM to find the current month survey results. This survey is conducted monthly.

Job descriptions and wage information

- Alberta occupational profiles: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/occinfo**
- Alberta wage and salary information: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/wageinfo**
- SkillsSolutionsNet: **www.skillssolutionsnet.com**
- Workplace information and innovation: **www.sdc.gc.ca**
  Choose English, then go to Policies & Programs and select Labour Program. Scroll to and click on Workplace Information & Innovation.

Technological change

- Post-secondary education and training in Alberta: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/edinfo**
- The Business Link: **www.cbsc.org/alberta**
  Choose English, then click on Innovation.
- Technology roadmaps by industry: **www.strategis.gc.ca**
  Choose English, then click on Research, Technology and Innovation. Scroll to Technology Roadmaps.

Want *to Know* More?

Alberta Human Resources and Employment

Employers and business owners looking for information about the labour market, Alberta's employment standards, workplace health and safety advice and regulations or workplace information can access the following resources and services from Alberta Human Resources and Employment (AHRE).

Alberta Career Information Hotline

The Hotline is a career consulting and referral service.

Phone: 1-800-661-3753 toll-free in Alberta
(780) 422-4266 in Edmonton

Deaf or hard of hearing callers with TDD/TTY units call (780) 422-5283 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7215 toll-free throughout Alberta for message relay service.

E-mail: hotline@alis.gov.ab.ca
Website: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/hotline**

Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centres

AHRE service centres, located throughout the province, provide information about department programs and services, as well as information about the labour market, workplace, occupations, career planning and education programs and funding. To find the centre nearest you, call the Alberta Career Information Hotline (see above).

Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website

Visit the ALIS website for general workplace and labour market information, tip sheets for employers, wage and salary information (WAGEinfo), information about education and training programs (EDinfo), more than 540 Alberta occupational profiles (OCCinfo), as well as video clips and career, learning and employment publications.

Website: **www.alis.gov.ab.ca**

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Employment Standards Contact Centre

Contact Employment Standards for information about the minimum rights and responsibilities of employers. Recorded information and a faxback service for Employment Standards fact sheets are available 24 hours a day.

Phone: 310-0000 toll-free and enter (780) 427-3731 within Alberta
(780) 427-3731 in Edmonton

Deaf or hard of hearing callers with TDD/TTY units call
(780) 427-9999 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7215 toll-free throughout Alberta.

Fax: (780) 422-4349
E-mail: employmentstandards@gov.ab.ca
Website: **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/employmentstandards**

Labour market information and publications

The Labour Market Information website is a useful source of statistics, labour market outlooks and publications including *Understanding Alberta's Labour Force: Looking to the Future.*

Website: **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/lmi**

Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre

The Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre offers 24-hour access for reporting serious incidents and workplace fatalities. The contact centre can also answer your questions about:

- the *Occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and Code*
- unsafe work practices and workplaces
- workplace hazards, including chemical contaminants, noise, asbestos, machinery and fall protection.

For publications and resources to assist your health and safety planning, visit the Workplace Health and Safety website.

Phone: 1-866-415-8690 toll-free in Alberta
(780) 415-8690 in Edmonton

Deaf or hard of hearing callers with TDD/TTY units call
(780) 427-9999 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7215 toll-free throughout Alberta.

E-mail: whs@gov.ab.ca
Website: **www.gov.ab.ca/hre/whs**

Publications for employers and business owners

To get your copy of the following free AHRE publications:

- order or download a copy from the ALIS website at **www.alis.gov.ab.ca/careershop**
- call the Alberta Career Information Hotline at 1-800-661-3753
- visit an Alberta Human Resources and Employment service centre. Call the Hotline for the centre nearest you.

Alberta Careers Update 2004

This book looks at the global and provincial trends affecting Alberta's economy and society. These trends have an impact on occupations in the province and can affect career planning decisions. An Occupational Outlook section includes projections for more than 500 occupational groups.

Better Balance, Better Business: Options for work-life issues

The often conflicting demands of work and personal time commitments of employees can create stress and other issues for both employers and workers. This publication presents employers with the business case for why they should care about this issue, ways to improve the situation that will benefit both employers and employees and ideas about making useful changes.

Diversity: A strategy to meet your need for skilled workers

How do you as a business owner fill shortages of skilled workers? Consider recruiting and retaining a diversified workforce. This book offers a sound business case for hiring Aboriginal workers, immigrants, older workers, persons with disabilities, visible minorities and youth to meet your need for skilled workers in your sector.

Employment Series for Persons with Disabilities: Tips for employers

Today, more and more employers are hiring persons with disabilities. This book provides employers with a practical business approach, including numerous resources and answers to typical concerns and questions.

Finders & Keepers: Recruitment and retention strategies

This publication provides proven strategies and practical tools to help small- and medium-sized businesses attract, recruit, select and retain employees. *Finders & Keepers* condenses best practices and current research into practical and affordable steps. Additional resources and templates help employers meet the challenge of effective recruitment and retention.

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A Guide to Rights and Responsibilities in Alberta Workplaces

If you are new to the workplace or an employer in a small- or medium-sized business, this publication can help you find answers to questions about employment standards, health and safety, human rights and workers' compensation. A list of phone numbers and websites direct you to contact people and information to help you stay within workplace rules. The complementary-poster, *Sources and Resources: Workplace rights and responsibilities*, highlights key workplace contacts.

Let's Talk: A guide to resolving workplace conflicts

The conflict resolution methods presented in this publication are helpful for employees and employers of large, medium and small organizations, whether it's a private sector company or a not-for-profit association. *Let's Talk* contains information on how to handle situations internally and where to get outside help.

Safe and Healthy: A guide to managing an aging workforce

This publication examines perceptions and realities about the capabilities of the older worker and offers employers ways to keep workers of any age safe and healthy on the job.

Skills by Design: Strategies for employee development

Skills by Design is a toolbox for employers looking to sharpen the skills of their workforce. The publication builds the case that any business, no matter how small, should have the tools and know-how to do regular inspections, maintenance and enhancement of employee skills. It features the why, how and practical what of developing employee skills.

X-treme Safety: Survival tips for rookies in the workplace

Using the analogy of X-treme sport, this survival guide for young, inexperienced workers is packed with information about workplace health and safety regulations and employment standards in Alberta.

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Other Government of Alberta Resources

Service Alberta

Contact Service Alberta for general inquiries about Alberta government programs and services between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Monday to Friday. Voice mail is available after hours.

Phone: 310-0000 toll-free anywhere in Alberta
(780) 427-2711 in Edmonton

Deaf or hard of hearing callers with TTY equipment call (780) 427-9999 in Edmonton or 1-800-232-7215 toll-free throughout Alberta.

Website: **www.gov.ab.ca**

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission

Provides information and addresses complaints about human rights in the workplace.

Phone: 310-0000 toll-free anywhere in Alberta.
Enter the area code and phone number.
(780) 427-7661 in Edmonton
(403) 297-6571 in Calgary
For provincewide free access from a cellular phone, enter *310 (for Rogers AT&T) or #310 (for Telus).
Deaf or hard of hearing callers with TTY equipment call (780) 427-1597 in Edmonton or (403) 297-5639 in Calgary or 1-800-232-7215 toll-free throughout Alberta.

E-mail: humanrights@gov.ab.ca

Note: Confidential enquires will not be addressed through e-mail.

Website: **www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca**

Government of Canada

For information about federal government programs and services or to be directed to a Canadian government office, call 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232). Assistance is available 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Deaf or hard of hearing callers with TDD/TTY equipment call 1-800-465-7735 toll-free throughout Canada.

Website: **www.gc.ca**

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We'd like to hear from you ...

Labour Market Information for Your Business:
A practical guide

Date .....

What specific information in this publication did you find useful? How did it help you?

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How could we improve this publication? What was not useful?

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Do you have any suggestions for other information or other publications that would be of value to you?

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To receive a catalogue of our other publications and posters, please fill in this form.

Name .....

Organization .....

Address .....

..... Postal Code .....

Phone .....

Return this form to
People, Skills and Workplace Resources
Alberta Human Resources and Employment
12th Floor, South Tower, Capital Health Centre, 10030–107 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 3E4
Fax: 780-422-5319

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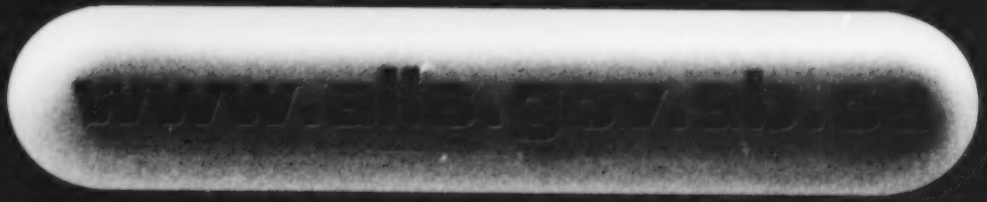
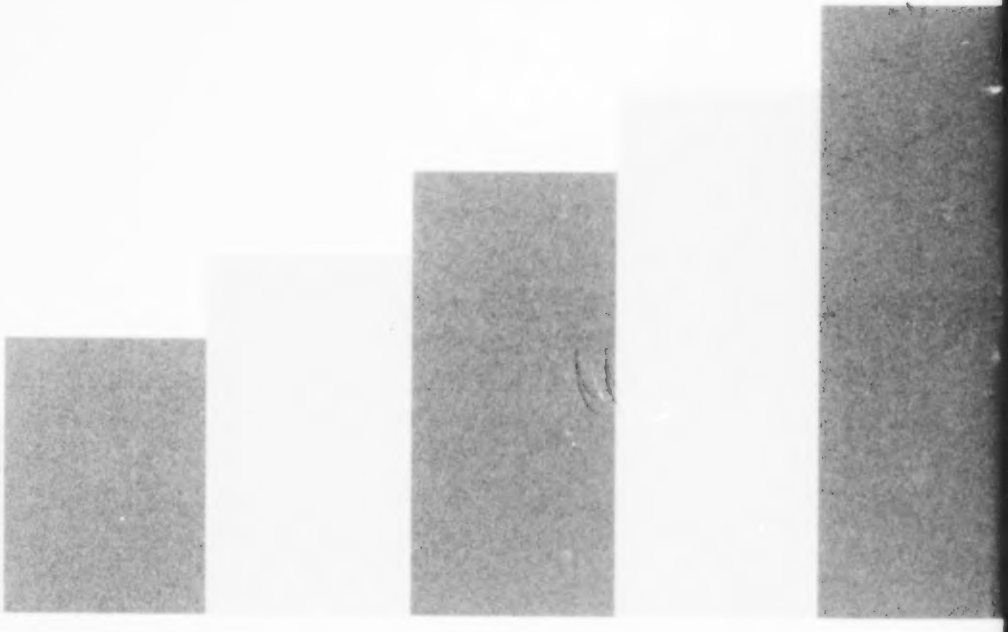
Explore your options on-line for Career, Learning and Employment information



- Career planning
- Education and training
- Occupational information
- Students finance
- Scholarships
- Job postings

Alberta



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